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ANIMAL RIGHTS AND FEMINIST THEORY

JOSEPHINE DONOVAN

Peter Singer prefaces his groundbreaking treatise *Animal Liberation* (1975) with an anecdote about a visit he and his wife made to the home of a woman who claimed to love animals, had heard he was writing a book on the subject, and so invited him to tea. Singer's attitude toward the woman is contemptuous: she had invited a friend who also loved animals and was "keen to meet us. When we arrived our hostess's friend was already there, and . . . certainly was keen to talk about animals. 'I do love animals,' she began . . . and she was off. She paused while refreshments were served, took a ham sandwich, and then asked us what pets we had."¹ Singer's point is not only to condemn the woman's hypocrisy in claiming to love animals while she was eating meat but also to disassociate himself from a sentimentalist approach to animal welfare.

This article is dedicated to my great dog Rooney (1974–87), who died as it was being completed but whose life led me to appreciate the nobility and dignity of animals.

¹ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: Avon, 1975), ix–x. Throughout I use the shorthand term "animal rights theory" to refer to any theorizing about humane treatment of animals, regardless of its philosophical roots. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Gloria Stevenson, who introduced me to the concept of animal rights years ago, and my dog Jessie.

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Speaking for his wife as well, he explains: "We were not especially 'interested in' animals. Neither of us had ever been inordinately fond of dogs, cats, or horses. . . . We didn't 'love' animals. . . . The portrayal of those who protest against cruelty to animals as sentimental, emotional 'animal lovers' [has meant] excluding the entire issue . . . from serious political and moral discussion." In other words, he fears that to associate the animal rights cause with "womanish" sentiment is to trivialize it.²

Singer's concerns about the image and strategies of animal rights activists are shared by another major contemporary theorist of animal rights, Tom Regan. In his preface to *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983) Regan stresses that "since all who work on behalf of the interests of animals are . . . familiar with the tired charge of being 'irrational,' 'sentimental,' 'emotional,' or worse, we can give the lie to these accusations only by making a concerted effort not to indulge our emotions or parade our sentiments. And that requires making a sustained commitment to rational inquiry."³ In a later article Regan defends himself against charges of being hyperrational by maintaining that "reason—not sentiment, not emotion—reason compels us to recognize the equal inherent value of . . . animals and . . . their equal right to be treated with respect."⁴ Regan's and Singer's rejection of emotion and their concern about being branded sentimentalist are not accidental; rather, they expose the inherent bias in contemporary animal rights theory toward rationalism, which, paradoxically, in the form of Cartesian objectivism, established a major theoretical justification for animal abuse.

Women animal rights theorists seem, indeed, to have developed more of a sense of emotional bonding with animals as the basis for their theory than is evident in the male literature. Mary Midgley, for example, another contemporary animal rights theorist, urges, "What makes our fellow beings entitled to basic consideration is surely not intellectual capacity but emotional fellowship." Animals, she notes, exhibit "social and emotional complexity of the kind which is expressed by the formation of deep, subtle and lasting relationships."⁵ Constantia Salamone, a leading feminist animal

² In the *Ethics* Spinoza remarked that opposition to animal slaughter was based on "superstition and womanish pity" rather than on reason (as cited in Mary Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter* [Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983], 10). This is the kind of charge that disconcerts Singer.

³ Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), xii.

⁴ Tom Regan, "The Case for Animal Rights," in *In Defense of Animals*, ed. Peter Singer (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 24.

⁵ Mary Midgley, "Persons and Non-Persons," in Singer, ed., 60.

rights activist, roundly condemns the rationalist, masculinist bias of current animal rights theory.⁶ In the nineteenth century, women activists in the antivivisection movement, such as Frances Power Cobbe, viewed as their enemy the “coldly rational materialism” of science, which they saw as threatening “to freeze human emotion and sensibility. . . . Antivivisection . . . shielded the heart, the human spirit, from degradation at the hands of heartless science.”⁷

Yet Singer’s anecdote points up that one cannot simply turn uncritically to women as a group or to a female value system as a source for a humane relationship ethic with animals. While women have undoubtedly been less guilty of active abuse and destruction of animals than men (Virginia Woolf observes in *Three Guineas*: “The vast majority of birds and beasts have been killed by you; not by us”),⁸ they nevertheless have been complicit in that abuse, largely in their use of luxury items that entail animal pain and destruction (such as furs) and in their consumption of meat. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, an animal welfare crusader as well as a feminist, criticized such hypocrisy decades before Singer in her “A Study in Ethics” (1933). Condemning women’s habit of wearing “as decoration the carcass of the animal,” Gilman remarks the shocking inconsistency that “civilized Christian women, sensitive to cruelty, fond of pets, should willingly maintain the greatest possible cruelty to millions of harmless little animals. . . . Furs are obtained by trapping. Trapping means every agony known to an animal, imprisonment, starvation, freezing, frantic fear and pain. If one woman hung up or fastened down hundreds of kittens each by one paw in her backyard in winter weather, to struggle and dangle and freeze, to cry in anguish and terror that she might ‘trim’ something with

⁶ Constantia Salamone, xeroxed form letter, July 1986.

⁷ James Turner, *Reckoning with the Beast: Animals, Pain and Humanity in the Victorian Mind* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 101, 103. Roswell C. McCrea, *The Humane Movement: A Descriptive Survey* (1910; reprint, College Park, Md.: McGrath, 1969), 117, notes that sentimentalism versus rationalism as a basis for animal rights theory was an issue in the nineteenth-century animal rights campaign: “As a rule humane writings [and] work, are based on a ‘faith’ rather than any rationalistic scheme of fundamentals. The emotional basis is a common one, and the kind treatment of animals is assumed to be a thing desirable in itself.” The exception was the Humanitarian League under Henry Salt, which tried to place “humane principles on a consistent and rational basis.” It was based “not merely on a kindly sentiment, a product of the heart rather than of the head.” However, Frances Power Cobbe and other women theorists of the time were not afraid to privilege the heart. For an introduction to their ideas see Coral Lansbury, *The Old Brown Dog: Women, Workers, and Vivisection in Edwardian England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

⁸ Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (1938; reprint, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1963), 6. Woolf’s note to this passage indicates she had done some research on the issue.

their collected skins . . . she would be considered a monster.”⁹ Recognizing that such problems are involved in women’s historical relationship with animals, I believe that cultural feminism, informed by an awareness of animal rights theory, can provide a more viable theoretical basis for an ethic of animal treatment than is currently available.

Contemporary animal rights theory includes two major theoretical approaches, one based on natural rights theory and the other on utilitarianism. The major theoretician for the natural rights position is Tom Regan, whose primary statement appears in *The Case for Animal Rights*. In this lengthy, impressive, but sometimes casuistical document Regan argues that animals—in particular, adult mammals—are moral entities who have certain inalienable rights, just as humans do, according to the natural rights doctrine enunciated in the eighteenth century (particularly by Locke).¹⁰

Regan builds his case primarily by refuting Kant, who had stipulated in his second formulation of the Categorical Imperative that “man and generally any rational being *exists* as an end in himself, *not merely as a means*,” that rational beings possess “*absolute worth*,” and that therefore they are entitled to treatment as ends.¹¹ It is on the basis of their rationality that humans are identified by Kant and other Enlightenment thinkers as moral agents who are therefore entitled to such natural rights as to be treated as ends.

In the articulation of Locke and the framers of the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution not all humans were in fact considered sufficiently rational as to be considered “persons”

⁹ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “A Study in Ethics” (Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass., 1933, typescript). Published by permission of the Schlesinger Library. It must be noted that the women criticized by Singer and Gilman are guilty of sins of omission rather than commission; they are not actively conducting atrocities against animals. Their failure is due to ignorance and habit, traits that are presumably correctable through moral education. In this article I focus mainly on the rationalist ideology of modern science because it is the principal contemporary legitimization of animal sacrifice and because its objectifying epistemology, which turns animals into “its,” has become the pervasive popular view of animals, thus legitimizing other forms of animal abuse such as factory farming.

¹⁰ Despite his accent on rigorously rational inquiry, Regan throughout uses the term *counterintuitive* as a kind of escape clause whenever deductive reason per se proves inadequate. An example of where Regan’s argument becomes (to me at least) illogical is his lifeboat hypothetical where he maintains that with four normal adult humans and one dog, it is the dog who must be sacrificed. His reasoning here suggests an unacknowledged hierarchy with humans still at the top. See Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, 324–25. See also Peter Singer’s critique in “Ten Years of Animal Rights Liberation,” *New York Review of Books* (January 17, 1985), 46–52, esp. 49–50, and “The Dog in the Lifeboat,” *New York Review of Books* (April 25, 1985), 57.

¹¹ Kant, “Theory of Ethics,” in *Kant Selections*, ed. Theodore M. Greene (New York: Scribner’s, 1927), 308–9.

entitled to rights: only white, male property holders were deemed adequately endowed to be included in the category of personhood. Indeed, much of the nineteenth-century women's rights movement was devoted to urging that women be considered persons under the Constitution.¹² Here as elsewhere in Western political theory women and animals are cast together. Aristotle, for example, linked women and animals in the *Nicomachean Ethics* by excluding them from participation in the moral life. As Keith Thomas points out, the centuries-long debate over whether women have souls paralleled similar discussions about the moral status of animals.¹³

In building his case for animal rights, Regan extends the category of those having absolute worth or inherent value to include nonrational but still intelligent nonhuman creatures. He does this by elaborating the distinction between moral agents (those who are capable of making rational, moral judgments) and moral patients (those who cannot make such formulations but who are nevertheless entitled to be treated as ends). This is contrary to Kant, who maintains that "animals . . . are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man."¹⁴

Regan makes his case by countering Kant's theory that human moral patients (i.e., those who are severely retarded, infants, or others unable to reason) need not be treated as ends. This to Regan is unacceptable. Therefore, if one accepts both moral agents and moral patients as entitled to the basic respect implied in the notion of rights, Regan argues, it follows that nonhuman moral patients (animals) must be included in the category of those entitled to be treated as ends. To argue otherwise is speciesist; that is, it arbitrarily assumes that humans are worth more than other life-forms. Speciesism is a concept borrowed from feminist and minority group theory. It is analogous to sexism and racism in that it privileges one group (humans, males, whites, or Aryans) over another.¹⁵ Regan, therefore, maintains an absolutist deontological nonconsequential-

¹² See further discussion in Josephine Donovan, *Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism* (New York: Ungar, 1985), 4–5.

¹³ Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (New York: Pantheon, 1983), 43. For further thoughts on the "cultural symbolism" that links women and animals, see Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter* (n. 2 above), 78–79.

¹⁴ Kant, "Duties to Animals and Spirits," as cited in Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, 177.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 155; the term *speciesist* was coined, according to Regan, by Richard D. Ryder in *Victims of Science* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1975). See also Singer, *Animal Liberation* (n. 1 above), 7, 9.

ist position; treating animals as ends is, he insists, a moral duty. It is a matter of justice, not kindness.¹⁶

Although Regan rejects Kant's determination of rationality as the basis for entry into the "kingdom of ends," he specifies that those who have "inherent value" must have a subjective consciousness (be "subject of a life") and/or have the kind of complex awareness found in adult mammals.¹⁷ This criterion leaves open the question of severely retarded humans, humans in irreversible comas, fetuses, even human infants. Regan's criterion in fact privileges those with complex awareness over those without.¹⁸ Therefore, though it rejects Kantian rationalism, Regan's theory depends on a notion of complex consciousness that is not far removed from rational thought, thus, in effect, reinvoking the rationality criterion. I do not quarrel with the idea that adult mammals have a highly developed intelligence that may be appropriated to human reason; rather I question the validity of the rationality criterion. Regan's difficulty here stems in part, it seems, from natural rights theory, which privileges rationalism and individualism, but it may also reflect his own determined exclusion of sentiment from "serious" intellectual inquiry.

From a cultural feminist point of view the position developed by utilitarian animal rights theorists is more tenable in this regard because it dispenses with the higher-intelligence criterion, insisting instead on the capacity to feel—or the capacity to suffer—as the criterion by which to determine those who are entitled to be treated as ends.

The utilitarian position in animal rights theory has been developed principally by Peter Singer. Indeed, it is his admirable and courageous book *Animal Liberation* that largely galvanized the current animal rights movement. Singer's central premise derives from a key passage in Jeremy Bentham's *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789). During a high tide of the natural rights doctrine, the French Revolution, Bentham wrote:

The day *may* come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny. . . . It may one day come to be recognized that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum*, are reasons . . . insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to

¹⁶ Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, 280.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 77, 247, 319.

the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, *Can they suffer*?¹⁹

A similar passage occurs in Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1755). It seems in part to be a rejoinder to the Cartesian view of animals as machines, discussed below.

We may put an end to the ancient disputes concerning the participation of other animals in the law of nature; for it is plain that, as they want both reason and free will, they cannot be acquainted with that law; however, as they partake in some measure of our nature in virtue of that sensibility with which they are endowed, we may well imagine they ought likewise to partake of the benefit of natural law, and that man owes them a certain kind of duty. In fact, it seems that, if I am obliged not to injure any being like myself, it is not so much because he is a reasonable being, as because he is a sensible being.²⁰

Thus, both Bentham and Rousseau advocate that natural rights, or entrance into Kant's kingdom of ends, be accorded to creatures who can feel. Their assumption is that the common condition that unites humans with animals is sensibility, the capacity to feel pain and experience pleasure.

The utilitarian position proceeds from this premise to establish that if a creature is sentient, it has interests that are as equally worthy of consideration as any other sentient creature's interests when humans make decisions about their well-being. In Singer's words, "The capacity for suffering and enjoyment is a *prerequisite for having interests*."²¹ A stone, for example, does not have interests in the question of being kicked because it cannot suffer, whereas a mouse does have such interests because it can experience pain as a

¹⁹ Jeremy Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), in *The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill*, ed. Edwin A. Burtt (New York: Modern, 1939), 847, n. 21.

²⁰ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality among Mankind*, ed. Lester K. Born (New York: Washington Square, 1967), 172. See also Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter*, 62.

²¹ Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 8.

result. "If a being suffers," Singer maintains, "there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration. . . . The principle of equality requires that its suffering be counted equally with the like suffering . . . of any other being." In short, "pain and suffering are bad and should be prevented or minimized, irrespective of the race, sex, or species of the being that suffers."²² This is the essence of the utilitarian animal rights position.

Utilitarian animal rights theory has the virtue of allowing some flexibility in decision making, as opposed to Regan's absolutist stance that no animal's suffering is justifiable under any circumstances. As a utilitarian, Singer insists, for example, that an awareness of consequences can and should influence the evaluation of an individual's fate in any given situation. This leads him to admit that "there could conceivably be circumstances in which an experiment on an animal stands to reduce suffering so much that it would be permissible to carry it out even if it involved harm to the animal . . . [even if] the animal were a human being."²³ Elsewhere he says that if the suffering of one animal would have the result of curing all forms of cancer, that suffering would be justifiable.²⁴ Singer's basic position is that "similar interests must count equally, regardless of the species of the being involved. Thus, if some experimental procedure would hurt a human being and a pig to the same extent, and there were no other relevant consequences . . . it would be wrong to say that we should use the pig because the suffering of the pig counts less than the suffering of a human being."²⁵

Therefore, although Singer also uses the term "animal rights," his modifications take it even farther from traditional natural rights doctrine than do Regan's reconceptions. It is not a matter of political rights of a rational citizen, such as the right to free speech or to vote, nor is it the right of an intelligent creature to be treated as an end (in Kantian terms). Rather it is the right of a sentient creature to have its interests in remaining unharmed considered equally when weighed against the interests of another sentient creature.²⁶

²² Ibid., 8, 18.

²³ Peter Singer and Tom Regan, "The Dog in the Lifeboat: An Exchange," *New York Review of Books* (April 25, 1985), 57. It should be noted that however much Regan and Singer disagree in theory, in practice their positions are similar: each opposes animal experimentation, exploitation of animals for food and clothing, factory farming, trapping, hunting, rodeos, and circuses.

²⁴ Singer, "Ten Years of Animal Rights Liberation" (n. 10 above), 48.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Peter Singer, "Ethics and Animal Liberation," in Singer, ed. (n. 4 above), 1–10. Historically, utilitarianism developed as part of the wave of sentimentalism that emerged in late eighteenth-century Europe, which paved the way intellectually for the animal protection movement of the nineteenth century. See Turner (n. 7 above),

Singer's insistence that animals have interests equal to humans makes his argument as morally compelling as Regan's contention that animals have rights. Nevertheless, there are some weaknesses in the utilitarian position. One is that a precise value standard for decision making or weighing of interests is not provided, which allows unacknowledged prejudices to intrude. Second, it requires a quantification of suffering, a "mathematization" of moral beings, that falls back into the scientific modality that legitimates animal sacrifice. Thus, while it recognizes sensibility or feeling as the basis for treatment as a moral entity, the utilitarian position remains locked in a rationalist, calculative mode of moral reasoning that distances the moral entities from the decision-making subject, reifying them in terms of quantified suffering. Just as the natural rights theory proposed by Regan inherently privileges rationality, Singer's utilitarianism relapses into a mode of manipulative mastery that is not unlike that used by scientific and medical experimenters to legitimate such animal abuses as vivisection. It is for this reason that we must turn to cultural feminism for alternative theory.

Cultural feminism has a long history. Even during feminism's "first wave," thinkers otherwise as diverse as Margaret Fuller, Emma Goldman, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman articulated a critique of the atomistic individualism and rationalism of the liberal tradition.²⁷ They did so by proposing a vision that emphasized collectivity, emotional bonding, and an organic (or holistic) concept of life. In *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), for example, Fuller argued that the

31–33; and Thomas (n. 13 above), 173–80. Of course, women's increasing participation in cultural life in the eighteenth century undoubtedly contributed to the emergence of sentimentalism and to the growing empathy for animals seen in Bentham's and Rousseau's statements.

²⁷ For a full discussion, see Donovan, *Feminist Theory* (n. 12 above), 31–63. The other major theoretical tradition that one might wish to turn to for alternative ideas about human relationship with the natural world is Marxism; however, as Isaac D. Balbus perceptively points out in *Marxism and Domination: A Neo-Hegelian, Feminist, Psychoanalytic Theory of Sexual, Political and Technological Liberation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), Marxism is rooted in a philosophy of domination. Marx indeed saw human identity as formed through labor that manipulates an objectified physical world. Balbus turns instead to Hegel, who urged that "all substance is subject," that is, motivated by a specific teleology, but all subjects are not identical (285). "Neither instrumental reason nor mere intuition or feeling but rather a new form of instrumental, empathic reason will guide the interactions between humans and the world on which they depend" (286). Such a "postobjectifying consciousness" (285) will emerge, Balbus believes, when new child-rearing practices are developed that intervene in the present male maturation process, which requires the development of enmity for the mother. Thus, Balbus turns in the latter part of his book to neo-Freudian cultural feminist theory—specifically that developed by Dorothy Dinnerstein—to substantiate his position.

"liberation" of women and their integration into public life would effect a feminization of culture, which would mean a reign of "plant-like gentleness," a harmonic, peaceful rule, an end to violence of all kinds (including, she specifies, the slaughter of animals for food) and the institution of vegetarianism (substituting, she urges, "pulse [beans] for animal food").²⁸ Gilman put forth a similar vision in her utopian novel *Herland* (1911). Indeed, in addition to Fuller and Gilman there is a long list of first-wave feminists who advocated either vegetarianism or animal welfare reform, including Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lydia Maria Child, Elizabeth Blackwell, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, Susan B. Anthony, Victoria Woodhull, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the Grimké sisters, Lucy Stone, Frances Willard, Frances Power Cobbe, Anna Kingford, Caroline Earle White, and Agnes Ryan.²⁹

²⁸ Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845; reprint, New York: Norton, 1971), 113.

²⁹ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792; reprint, Baltimore: Penguin, 1975), 291–92, and *Original Stories from Real Life* (London: J. Johnson, 1788); Harriet Beecher Stowe, "Rights of Dumb Animals," *Hearth and Home* 1, no. 2 (January 2, 1869): 24; Elizabeth Blackwell, *Essays in Medical Sociology* (London: Longmans Green, 1909); Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, "Love-liness: A Story," *Atlantic Monthly* 84 (August 1899): 216–29, " 'Tammyslanty,' " *Woman's Home Companion* 35 (October 1908): 7–9, *Trixy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), *Though Life Do Us Part* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1908), and various articles on vivisection; Frances Power Cobbe, *The Modern Rack* (London: Swann, Sonnenschein, 1899), *The Moral Aspects of Vivisection* (London: Williams & Margater, 1875); Anna Bonus Kingford, *The Perfect Way in Diet*, 2d ed. (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, 1885), *Addresses and Essays on Vegetarianism* (London: Watkins, 1912). Anthony, Woodhull, the Grimké sisters, Stone, and Willard are mentioned by various sources as being vegetarian, and Child as being concerned with animal protectionism. See Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 234. Elizabeth Griffith, in her biography *In Her Own Right* (New York: Oxford, 1984), notes that Elizabeth Cady Stanton followed the Grahamite (largely vegetarian) regime in her youth, following the practices of the Grimkés (34–35). Ruth Bordin, in *Frances Willard: A Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 122, says Frances Willard believed flesh-eating was "savagery" and that the "enlightened mortals of the twentieth century [would] surely be vegetarians." Indeed, there is an interesting connection between the nineteenth-century temperance and humane movements. In 1891 the WCTU in Philadelphia (probably under the aegis of Mary F. Lovell) developed a "Department of Mercy" dedicated to antivivisectionism. According to Turner, 94, it was virulently antiscience. In *Letters of Lydia Maria Child* (1883; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), Child says she is a member of the SPCA and supports the humane movement. She stresses the close kinship between animals and humans as her rationale (letter of 1872, 213–14). Caroline Earle White was a leading animal protectionist in nineteenth-century Philadelphia; she wrote numerous articles on the subject. Much of Agnes Ryan's material is unpublished in the Schlesinger Library in Cambridge. It includes an "animal rights" novel, *Who Can Fear Too Many Stars?* Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote numerous articles on animal issues, including "The Beast Prison," *Forerunner*

In the second wave of feminist theory there have been a few articles specifically linking feminism with animal rights: in the 1970s Carol Adams's articles on vegetarianism and more recently Constantia Salamone's piece in *Reweaving the Web of Life* (1982).³⁰ There have been a number of other works that link feminism more generally with ecology, such as those by Susan Griffin, Carolyn Merchant, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Marilyn French, Paula Gunn Allen, Chrystos, and Ynestra King.³¹

From the cultural feminist viewpoint, the domination of nature, rooted in postmedieval, Western, male psychology, is the underlying cause of the mistreatment of animals as well as of the exploitation of women and the environment. In her pathbreaking study, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*,

31 (November 1912): 128–30, and “Birds, Bugs and Women,” *Forerunner* 4 (May 1913): 131–32. A further useful reference on women in the U.S. nineteenth-century animal welfare movement is Sydney H. Coleman, *Humane Society Leaders in America* (Albany, N.Y.: Humane Association, 1924).

³⁰ Carol Adams, “The Oedible Complex: Feminism and Vegetarianism,” in *The Lesbian Reader*, ed. Gina Covina and Laurel Galana (Oakland, Calif.: Amazon, 1975), 145–52, and “Vegetarianism: The Inedible Complex,” *Second Wave* 4, no. 4 (1976): 36–42; Constantia Salamone, “The Prevalence of the Natural Law: Women and Animal Rights,” in *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence*, ed. Pam McAllister (Philadelphia: New Society, 1982), 364–75. See also the articles by Janet Culbertson, Cynthia Branigan, and Shirley Fuerst in “Special Issue: Feminism and Ecology,” *Heresies*, no. 13 (1981); Joan Beth Clair (Newman), “Interview with Connie Salamone,” *Woman of Power*, no. 3 (Winter/Spring 1986), 18–21; Andrée Collard, “Freeing the Animals,” *Trivia*, no. 10 (Spring 1987), 6–23; Karen Davis, “Farm Animals and the Feminine Connection,” *Animals' Agenda* 8, no. 1 (January/February 1988): 38–39, which provides an important feminist critique of the macho vein in the ecology movement; and Andrée Collard with Joyce Contrucci, *Rape of the Wild: Man's Violence against Animals and the Earth* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989). Forthcoming is Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum). Alice Walker has also recently embraced the animal rights cause. See her “Am I Blue?” *Ms.* (July 1986), reprinted in *Through Other Eyes: Animal Stories by Women*, ed. Irene Zahava (Freedom, Calif.: Crossing, 1988), 1–6; and Ellen Bring, “Moving toward Coexistence: An Interview with Alice Walker,” *Animals' Agenda* 8, no. 3 (April 1988): 6–9.

³¹ Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978); Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980); Rosemary Radford Ruether, *New Woman/New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury, 1975), and *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon, 1983); Marilyn French, *Beyond Power: On Women, Men, and Morals* (New York: Summit, 1985); Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (Boston: Beacon, 1986); Chrystos, “No Rock Scorns Me as Whore,” in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, ed. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (Watertown, Mass.: Persephone, 1981); Ynestra King, “Feminism and the Revolt of Nature,” *Heresies*, no. 13 (1981): 812–16.

Carolyn Merchant recognizes that “we must reexamine the formation of a world view and a science that, by reconceptualizing reality as a machine rather than a living organism, sanctioned the domination of both nature and women.”³²

Critiques of the logical fallacies inherent in the scientific epistemology are not new. Wittgenstein demonstrated the tautological nature of the analytic judgment in his *Tractatus* in 1911, indeed, a point Hume made in the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* in 1748; but it was the critique offered by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) that first made the connection between what Husserl called the “mathematisation of the world,”³³ and the derogation of women and animals.³⁴

The scientific or experimental method converts reality into mathematical entities modeled on the physical universe, which, as seen in Newton’s laws, is cast in the image of a mechanism that operates according to fixed repetitions. No distinction is made between life-forms such as human and animal bodies, which are seen as machines in the Cartesian view, and nonlife forms such as rocks.

Horkheimer and Adorno argue that the imposition of the mathematical model upon reality reflects a psychology of domination. “In [scientific] thought, men distance themselves from nature in order thus imaginatively to present it to themselves—but only in order to determine how it is to be dominated.” Using the term “enlightenment” to refer to the scientific viewpoint, they note that “enlightenment is as totalitarian as any system”; it operates “as a dictator toward men. He knows them in so far as he can manipulate them.”³⁵

The pretensions of universality of scientific knowledge and the generalizing character of the machine metaphor mean that differences and particularities are erased, subdued, dominated. “In the impartiality of scientific language, that which is powerless has wholly lost any means of expression.”³⁶ As Max Scheler noted, “Those aspects which cannot be represented in the chosen symbolic language of mathematics . . . are assigned a fundamentally different status: they belong to the realm of the ‘subjective’ and

³² Merchant, xviii.

³³ As cited in Colin Gordon’s afterword to *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, by Michel Foucault (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 238.

³⁴ Max Horkheimer and Theodor F. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944; reprint, New York: Herder & Herder, 1972).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 39, 24, 9.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

‘unscientific.’”³⁷ Thus, all that is anomalous—that is, alive and nonpredictable—is erased or subdued in the Newtonian/Cartesian epistemological paradigm. The anomalous and the powerless include women and animals, both of whose subjectivities and realities are erased or converted into manipulable objects—“the material of subjugation”³⁸—at the mercy of the rationalist manipulator, whose self-worth is established by the fact that he thus subdues his environment. “Everything—even the human individual, not to speak of the animal—is converted into the repeatable, replaceable process, into a mere example for the conceptual models of the system.”³⁹

Horkheimer and Adorno conclude that this scientific epistemology is an ideological form that is rooted in the material conditions of social domination—particularly that of men over women. In “their nauseating physiological laboratories” scientists “force [information] from defenseless [animals]. . . . The conclusion they draw from mutilated bodies [is that] . . . because he does injury to animals, he and he alone in all creation voluntarily functions. . . . Reason . . . belongs to man. The animal . . . knows only irrational terror.”⁴⁰ But the scientist feels no compassion for or empathy with his victims because “for rational beings . . . to feel concern about an irrational creature is a futile occupation. Western civilization has left this to women . . . [through] the division of labor imposed on her by man.”⁴¹

The association of the postmedieval split between reason and the emotions with the division of labor and in particular with the rise of industrial capitalism is a well-developed thesis, particularly among Marxist theorists. Eli Zaretsky, in *Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life* (1976), suggests that the reification of public life occasioned by alienated industrial labor meant personal relationships were relegated to the private sphere: “The split in society between ‘personal feelings’ and ‘economic production’ was integrated with the sexual division of labour. Women were identified with emotional life, men with the struggle for existence.”⁴²

³⁷ As cited in William Leiss, *The Domination of Nature* (New York: Braziller, 1972), 111. Sandra Harding similarly observes that “it is the scientific subject’s voice that speaks with general and abstract authority; the objects of inquiry ‘speak’ only in response to what scientists ask them, and they speak in the particular voice of their historically specific conditions and locations” (*The Science Question in Feminism* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986], 124).

³⁸ Horkheimer and Adorno, 84.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 245.

⁴¹ Ibid., 248; see also 14, 21.

⁴² Eli Zaretsky, *Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 64.

Women's connection with economic life has been nearly universally "production for use" rather than "production for exchange"—that is, their labor has prepared material for immediate use by the household rather than for use as a commodity for exchange or for monetary payment. Such a practice, theorists have argued, tends to create a psychology that values the objects of production emotionally in a way that alienated production for exchange cannot. Since in the capitalist era it is largely women who engage in use-value production, it may be a basis for the relational, contextually oriented epistemology that contemporary theorists ascribe to Western women.⁴³ The relegation of women, emotions, and values to the private sphere, to the margins, allowed, as Horkheimer, Adorno, and others have noted, masculine practices in the public political and scientific sphere to proceed amorally, "objectively," without the restraint of "subjective" relational considerations, which are in any event elided or repressed by the dominant disciplines.

Like Carolyn Merchant, Horkheimer and Adorno recognize that the witch-hunts of the early modern period were symptomatic of the new need to erase and subdue anomalous, disorderly (and thus feminine) nature. Horkheimer and Adorno consider that the eradication of witches registered "the triumph of male society over prehistoric matriarchal and mimetic stages of development" and "of self-preserving reason . . . [in] the mastery of nature."⁴⁴ Merchant suggests witches represent that aspect of nature that did not fit into the orderly pattern of the mathematical paradigm; they therefore were seen as dangerously rebellious: "Disorderly woman, like chaotic nature, needed to be controlled."⁴⁵

Merchant notes that Bacon, one of the formulators of the experimental method, used the analogy of a witch inquisition to explain how the scientist manipulates nature in order to extract information from it. He wrote: "For you have but to follow it and as it were hound nature in her wanderings, and you will be able when

⁴³ Nancy C. M. Hartsock, *Money, Sex and Power: Toward A Feminist Historical Materialism* (New York: Longman, 1983), 152, 246. On use-value production, see Karl Marx, *Capital*, in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 422–23. See Harding, 142–61, for a useful summary of what she calls "feminist standpoint epistemologies." They are rooted, she notes, in the assumption derived from Hegel's notion of the master/slave consciousness that "women's subjugated position provides the possibility of a more complete and less perverse understanding" (26). Women's historical experience of silence, of being in the "slave" position vis-à-vis the "master" may provide a basis for empathy with other silenced voices, such as those of animals.

⁴⁴ Horkheimer and Adorno, 249.

⁴⁵ Merchant (n. 31 above), 127.

you like to lead and drive her afterward to the same place again.”⁴⁶ The image of nature as a female to be dominated could not be more explicit.

The mathematical paradigm imposed the image of the machine on all reality. It was Descartes who most fully developed the idea that nonmental life-forms function as machines, which some of his followers (La Mettrie, e.g., in *L’homme machine*) carried to its extreme. Tom Regan critiques the Cartesian view at length in *The Case for Animal Rights*;⁴⁷ it is clear that the notion of animals as feelingless, unconscious robots (which Rousseau, among others—see above—rejected) legitimated (and continues to legitimate) atrocious scientific experimentation. One early anonymous critic of Descartes noted: “The [Cartesian] scientists administered beatings to dogs with perfect indifference and made fun of those who pitied the creatures as if they felt pain. They said the animals were clocks; that the cries they emitted when struck were only the sound of a little spring that had been touched, but that the whole body was without feeling. They nailed the poor animals up on boards by their four paws to vivisection them to see the circulation of the blood which was a great subject of controversy.”⁴⁸

In a recent article, “The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought,” Susan Bordo describes Cartesian objectivism as an “aggressive intellectual ‘flight from the feminine.’”⁴⁹ “The ‘great Cartesian anxiety’ [seen especially in the *Meditations* is] over separation from the organic female universe of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Cartesian objectivism [is] a defensive response to that separation anxiety.”⁵⁰ In the process “the formerly female earth becomes inert *res extensa*: dead, mechanically interacting nature ‘She’ becomes ‘it’—and ‘it’ can be understood. Not through sympathy, of course, but by virtue of the very *object*-ivity of ‘it.’”⁵¹

Natural rights theory, likewise an expression of Enlightenment rationalism, similarly imposes a machine grid upon political and moral reality. Recent feminist theorists have criticized the neutral and objective pretenses of the liberal theoretical tradition for leaving out the anomalous context in which events occur, inscribing them instead in an abstract grid that distorts or ignores the historical environment. For example, Catharine A. MacKinnon has criticized

⁴⁶ Ibid., 168.

⁴⁷ Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (n. 3 above), 3–33.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁹ Susan Bordo, “The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 11, no. 3 (Spring 1986): 439–56, esp. 441.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 451.

the traditional liberal interpretation of U.S. constitutional law for its neutral approach to justice. She urges that we “change one dimension of liberalism as it is embodied in law: the definition of justice as neutrality between abstract categories,” for this approach ignores the “substantive systems”—that is, the real conditions in which the abstractions operate. MacKinnon therefore rejects, to use her example, the idea that “strengthening the free speech of the Klan strengthens the free speech of Blacks.”⁵² This thesis is invalid, she maintains, because it equates “substantive powerlessness with substantive power”⁵³ through the use of a mechanistic conceptual model. Thus, MacKinnon, like the cultural feminists discussed below, rejects the “mathematizing” elisions of Enlightenment rationalism in favor of a view that “sees” the environmental context. Had the vivisectionists described above allowed this epistemological shift, they presumably would have “seen” the pain—the suffering and emotions—of the animals, which the machine abstraction through which they were viewing them ignored.

Unfortunately, contemporary animal rights theorists, in their reliance on theory that derives from the mechanistic premises of Enlightenment epistemology (natural rights in the case of Regan and utilitarian calculation in the case of Singer) and in their suppression/denial of emotional knowledge, continue to employ Cartesian, or objectivist, modes even while they condemn the scientific practices enabled by them.

Two of the earliest critics of Cartesian mechanism were women: Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle (1623–73), and Anne Finch, Lady Conway (1631–79). Finch emphatically rejected the Cartesian view; she felt that animals were not “composed of ‘mere fabric’ or ‘dead matter,’ but had spirits within them ‘having knowledge, sense, and love, and divers other faculties and properties of a spirit.’”⁵⁴ Cavendish, an untutored genius, challenged Descartes directly. She met him while she and her husband were in exile in France in the 1640s, and she later exchanged letters with him about his *Treatise on Animals*. In one of his letters, dated November 23, 1646, he is prompted by her to defend his notion of animals as machines: “I cannot share the opinion of Montaigne and others who attribute understanding or thought to animals.”⁵⁵

⁵² Catharine A. MacKinnon, “Pornography, Civil Rights, and Speech,” *Harvard Civil Rights/Civil Liberties Law Review* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 4.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 15. See also Donovan (n. 12 above), 2–3, 28–30.

⁵⁴ [Anne Finch], *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* (1690), as cited in Merchant, 260.

⁵⁵ Descartes, *Philosophical Letters*, trans. and ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 44.

As Keith Thomas (in *Man and the Natural World*) recognizes, Cavendish was one of the first to articulate the idea of animal rights.⁵⁶ Her biographer, Douglas Grant, notes: "Her writings . . . constantly illustrate her sensibility to nature [and] its creatures: how she felt for 'poor Wat,' the hunted hare . . . the stag; her pity for their unnecessary sufferings making her speak out in a century when cruelty to animals was all too common."⁵⁷ "As for man, who hunts all animals to death on the plea of sport, exercise and health," she asked, "is he not more cruel and wild than any bird of prey?"⁵⁸

The resistance of Finch and Cavendish to the impositions of early modern science were not isolated accidents, I propose. Indeed, if we accept Michel Foucault's contention that the ascendancy of the scientific disciplines and their attendant institutions was a historical process of colonization that intensified through the postmedieval period, reaching a height in the late nineteenth century, we must read Finch and Cavendish's critiques as an early feminist resistance to a process that inevitably meant the destruction of women's anomalous worlds. The suppression of women's social realities effected by the pseudoscientific medical theories (especially those of the sexologists) of the late nineteenth century was the final stage in what Foucault has labeled the "medicalisation de l'insolite"—the medicalization of the anomalous.⁵⁹ This process itself involved the social imposition of sexologist paradigms analogous to the scientific imposition of the mathematical machine paradigm on all living forms.

Perhaps this is why many women of the period seem to have felt a kinship to animals. Both were erased (at best) or manipulated (at worst) to behave in accordance with paradigms imposed by the rationalist lords—whether vivisectors or sexologists. Women in fact became the primary activists and energizers of the nineteenth-century antivivisection movement, which should be seen, I pro-

⁵⁶ Thomas (n. 13 above), 128, 170, 173–74, 280, 293–94.

⁵⁷ Douglas Grant, *Margaret the First* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1957), 44.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 124. The principal sources of Margaret Cavendish's writings on animal rights are her *Poems and Fancies* (1653; 2d ed., 1664), *Philosophical Letters* (1664), and *The World's Olio* (1655). Her empathetic imagination extends to plant life, to which she also imputes a form of consciousness (see esp. "Dialogue between an Oake, and a Man cutting him downe," in *Poems and Fancies*).

⁵⁹ Michel Foucault, *La Volonté de savoir*, vol. 1 of *Histoire de la sexualité* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 61 (my translation). For studies of female sexual deviance as defined by nineteenth-century sexologists, see George Chauncey, Jr., "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: Medicine and the Changing Conceptualization of Female Deviance," *Salmagundi* 58/59 (Fall 1982/Winter 1983): 114–45; and Lillian Faderman, "The Morbidification of Love between Women by Nineteenth-Century Sexologists," *Journal of Homosexuality* 4, no. 1 (Fall 1978): 73–90.

pose, as one manifestation of a counterhegemonic resistance undertaken by women against the encroachments of the new disciplines. Just as sexologists anatomized women's world "of love and ritual," "entomologizing" it (to use Foucault's term) into various species and subspecies of deviance, so vivisectionists turned animal bodies into machines for dissection.

In her study of the nineteenth-century English antivivisection movement, *The Old Brown Dog*, Coral Lansbury argues that women activists thus identified with the vivisected dog: "Every dog or cat strapped down for the vivisectionist's knife reminded them of their own condition." It was an image of dominance. Indeed, pioneer woman doctor Elizabeth Blackwell saw ovariectomies and other gynecological surgery as an "extension of vivisection." For the suffragists, "the image of the vivisected dog blurred and became one with the militant suffragette being force fed in Brixton Prison."⁶⁰

The dominance over nature, women, and animals inherent in this scientific epistemology, which requires that the anomalous other be forced into ordered forms, may be rooted in the Western male maturation process that requires men to establish their autonomous identity against the maternal/feminine. Hanna Fenichel Pitkin's recent analysis of the psychological development of Machiavelli, a prototypical formulator of postmedieval secularism, is most instructive in this regard. She reveals that "Machiavelli's writings show a persistent preoccupation with manhood."⁶¹ "If *virtù* [manliness] is Machiavelli's favorite quality, *effeminato* . . . is one of his most frequent and scathing epithets."⁶² In *The Prince* Machiavelli asserts that a leader rules "either by fortune or by ability (*virtù*)."⁶³ *Virtù* implies manipulative rationality and a certain macho willingness to exert military control. *Fortuna*, on the other hand, represents the nonrational, that which is unpredictable, all that is other to the exertion of rational control and masculine domination. In another celebrated passage in *The Prince* Machiavelli asserts: "Fortune is a woman and in order to be mastered she must be jogged and beaten."⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Lansbury (n. 7 above), 82, 89, 24.

⁶¹ Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *Fortune Is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 125. Pitkin's analysis relies on the work of "object-relations" neo-Freudian feminists such as Nancy Chodorow, Dorothy Dinnerstein, and Jane Flax.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶³ Machiavelli, *The Prince and Selected Discourses*, ed. Daniel Donno (New York: Bantam, 1966), 13.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 86–87.

In an unfinished poem that treats the Circe legend, Machiavelli opposes the world of women, nature, and animals to the civilized world of public order, the world of men. Pitkin notes that Circe is seen as a witch who has the power to turn men into beasts; much is made by Machiavelli of the “contrast between her feminine, natural world, and the world of men which is political and the product of human artifice. . . . Juxtaposed to the masculine world of law and liberty [is] the forest world where men are turned into animals and held captive in permanent dependence.”⁶⁵ “Male culture,” therefore, “symbolizes control over nature.”⁶⁶

Pitkin concludes, “Civilization . . . history, culture, the whole *vivere civile* that constitute the world of adult human autonomy are . . . male enterprises won from and sustained against female power—the engulfing mother . . . women as the ‘other’ . . . The struggle to sustain civilization . . . thus reflects the struggle of boys to become men.”⁶⁷ In “Gender and Science” (1978) Evelyn Fox Keller similarly argues that the autonomy and objectivity of the male scientist reflect the basic dissociation from the feminine affective world required in the male maturation process.⁶⁸

Beyond this ontogenetic theory is the phylogenetic thesis developed by Rosemary Radford Ruether that patriarchal civilization is built upon the historical emergence of a masculine ego consciousness that arose in opposition to nature, which was seen as feminine. Sexism, she notes, is rooted in this “‘war against the mother,’ the struggle of the transcendent ego to free itself from bondage to nature.”⁶⁹ Developing the existentialist notion of the transcendent masculine *pour soi*, and the immanent feminine *en soi*, Ruether urges (thereby rejecting Simone de Beauvoir’s thesis in *The Second Sex*) that the continual cultural attempt to transcend the feminine is what has led to our present ecological and moral crisis.

⁶⁵ Pitkin, 124, 128.

⁶⁶ Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk* (n. 31 above), 76.

⁶⁷ Pitkin, 230.

⁶⁸ Evelyn Fox Keller, “Gender and Science” (1978), in *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and the Philosophy of Science*, ed. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1983), 187–205, esp. 197. Hunting is, of course, the quintessential rite of passage in the male maturation process. As Barbara A. White notes in *The Female Novel of Adolescence* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1985), 126–27, “many initiation stories [involve] a hunt [where] the protagonist destroys a ‘feminine principle.’” Numerous feminist theorists have connected hunting with male dominance. See Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *His Religion and Hers* (1923; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Hyperion, 1976), 37–38. A more recent scholarly study is Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 66–69, 128–30.

⁶⁹ Ruether, *New Woman/New Earth* (n. 31 above), 25.

The fundamental defect in the “male ideology of transcendent dualism” is that its only mode is conquest. “Its view of what is over against itself is not that of the conversation of two subjects, but the conquest of an alien object. The intractability of the other side of the dualism to its demands does not suggest that the ‘other’ has a ‘nature’ of her own that needs to be respected and with which one must enter into conversation. Rather, this intractability is seen as that of disobedient rebellion.” Thus, “patriarchal religion ends . . . with a perception of the finite cosmos itself as evil in its intractability” to technological, scientific progress.⁷⁰

In her recent book *Beyond Power* (1985) Marilyn French argues that “patriarchy is an ideology founded on the assumption that man is distinct from the animal and superior to it. The basis for this superiority is man’s contact with a higher power/knowledge called god, reason, or control. The reason for man’s existence is to shed all animal residue and realize fully his ‘divine’ nature, the part that *seems* unlike any part owned by animals—mind, spirit, or control.”⁷¹ French sees a sadomasochism inherent in this cultural impulse to mutilate or kill off the animal/feminine in the self. According to French, patriarchal society has reached a frightening impasse: “Our culture, which worships above all else the power to kill, has reached the point of wishing to annihilate all that is ‘feminine’ in our world.”⁷²

Recent cultural feminist theorists have identified alternative epistemological and ontological modes that must, I believe, replace the mode of sadomasochistic control/dominance characteristic of patriarchal scientific epistemology. Ruether, for example, urges the development of new ways of relating to nature and to nonhuman life-forms. “The project of human life,” she says, “must cease to be seen as one of ‘domination of nature.’ . . . Rather, we have to find a new language of ecological responsiveness, a reciprocity between consciousness and the world systems in which we live and move and have our being.”⁷³ In *Sexism and God-Talk* (1983), Ruether suggests that human consciousness be seen not as different from other life-forms but as continuous with the “bimorphic” spirit inherent in other living beings.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 195–96.

⁷¹ French (n. 31 above), 341. Coral Lansbury recognizes the inherent connection between vivisection and sadomasochistic pornography and, indeed, analyzes a number of late nineteenth-century works of pornography that include scenes of vivisection (n. 7 above), chap. 7.

⁷² French, 523.

⁷³ Ruether, *New Woman/New Earth*, 83.

Our intelligence is a special, intense form of . . . radial energy, but it is not without continuity with other forms; it is the self-conscious or “thinking dimension” of the radial energy of matter. We must respond to a “thou-ness” in all beings. This is not romanticism or an anthropomorphic animism that sees “dryads in trees,” although there is truth in the animist view. . . . We respond not just as “I to it,” but as “I to thou,” to the spirit, the life energy that lies in every being in its own form of existence. The “brotherhood of man” needs to be widened to embrace not only women but also the whole community of life.⁷⁴

Ruether calls for “a new form of human intelligence,” one based on a relational, affective mode popularly called “right-brain thinking,” which moves beyond the linear, dichotomized, alienated consciousness characteristic of the “left-brain” mode seen in masculinist scientific epistemology. Linear, rationalist modes are, Ruether enjoins, “ecologically dysfunctional.”⁷⁵ What is needed is a more “disordered” (my term—if order means hierarchical dominance) relational mode that does not rearrange the context to fit a master paradigm but sees, accepts, and respects the environment.

In *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (1986), Paula Gunn Allen finds in those traditions attitudes toward nature that are quite different from the alienation and dominance that characterize Western epistemology and theology. God and the spiritual dimension do not transcend life but rather are immanent in all life-forms. All creatures are seen as sacred and entitled to fundamental respect. Allen, herself a Laguna Pueblo-Sioux, recalls that “when I was small, my mother often told me that animals, insects, and plants are to be treated with the kind of respect one customarily accords to high-status adults.” Nature, in her culture, is seen “not as blind and mechanical, but as aware and organic.” There is “a seamless web” between “human and nonhuman life.”⁷⁶

Rather than linear, hierarchical, mechanistic modes, Allen proposes a return to the achronological relational sensibility characteristic of her people. Recognizing that “there is some sort of connection between colonization and chronological time,” Allen observes that “Indian time rests on a perception of individuals as part of an entire gestalt in which fittingness is not a matter of how gear teeth mesh with each other but rather how the person meshes

⁷⁴ Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, 87.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 89–90. See also Gina Covina, “Rosy Rightbrain’s Exorcism/Invocation,” in Covina and Galana, eds. (n. 30 above), 90–102.

⁷⁶ Allen (n. 31 above), 1, 80, 100; see also 224.

with the revolving of the seasons, the land, and the mythic reality that shapes all life into significance. . . . Women's traditional occupations, their arts and crafts, and their literatures and philosophies are more often accretive than linear, more achronological than chronological, and more dependent on harmonious relationships of all elements within a field of perception than western culture in general. . . . Traditional peoples perceive their world in a unified-field fashion."⁷⁷

In her recent study of contemporary women's art, *Women as Mythmakers* (1984), Estella Lauter has identified the contours of a new myth that involves women and nature. "Many of these artists accept the affinity between woman and nature as a starting point—in fact, creating hybrid images of woman/animal/earth until the old distinctions among the levels in the Great Chain of Being seem unimportant."⁷⁸ Recognizing Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature*

⁷⁷ Ibid., 154, 243, 244.

⁷⁸ Estella Lauter, *Women as Mythmakers: Poetry and Visual Art by Twentieth-Century Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 18. A separate study could be written on animals in women's fiction. In a number of works animals are used to avenge injuries done to women; e.g., Edith Wharton's "Kerfol" (1916), in *The Collected Short Stories of Edith Wharton*, ed. R. W. B. Lewis (New York: Scribner's, 1968), 282–300; or Sylvia Plath's "The Fifty-ninth Bear" (1959), in *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 105–14. In others the woman/animal identification is explicit. See Mary Webb, *Gone to Earth* (fox) (1917; reprint, New York: Dalton, 1974); Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness* (fox) (New York: Covice, Freed, 1929); Ellen Glasgow, *The Sheltered Life* (ducks) (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Doran, 1932); Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (mule) (1937; reprint, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978); Willa Cather, *A Lost Lady* (woodpecker) (New York: Knopf, 1923); Harriette Arnow, *Hunter's Horn* (fox) (New York: Macmillan, 1949). In many of Glasgow's novels the animal/woman connection is a central issue. See Josephine Donovan, *The Demeter-Persephone Myth in Wharton, Cather, and Glasgow* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), esp. chap. 5. In many works by women, animals are women's closest companions and often there is a kind of psychic communication between them (especially when the women are witches). See Annie Trumbull Slosson, "Anna Malann," in *Dumb Foxglove and Other Stories* (New York: Harper, 1898), 85–117; Mary E. Wilkins (Freeman), "Christmas Jenny," in *A New England Nun and Other Stories* (New York: Harper, 1891), 160–77; Sarah Orne Jewett, "A White Heron," in *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, ed. Willa Cather (1925; reprint, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1956), 161–71; Virginia Woolf, "The Widow and the Parrot: A True Story," in *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Susan Dick (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 156–63; Rose Terry (Cooke), "Dely's Cow," in *How Celia Changed Her Mind and Selected Stories*, ed. Elizabeth Ammons (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 182–95; Susan Glaspell, "A Jury of Her Peers," in *American Voices: American Women*, ed. Lee R. Edwards and Arlyn Diamond (New York: Avon, 1973), 359–81. Sarah Grand's *The Beth Book* (1897; reprint, New York: Dial, 1980) and various works by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward (n. 29 above) are explicitly antivivisectionist. See Lansbury for further works in this area. Flannery O'Connor exposed the male hubris involved in

(1978) as prototypical, Lauter detects in contemporary women's literature and art "an image of relationships among orders of being that is extremely fluid without being disintegrative."⁷⁹

In these works, boundaries between the human world and the vegetable and animal realm are blurred. Hybrid forms appear: women transform into natural entities, such as plants, or merge with animal life. Lauter finds "surprising numbers of women" poets have a "high degree of identification with nature, without fear and without loss of consciousness." Many of these artists have revaluated ancient mythic figures that emblemize aspects of women's relationship with nature: Demeter/Kore, Artemis/Diana, Daphne, Circe. The earth is seen not as "dead matter to be plundered, but wounded matter from which renewal flows. The two bodies, women's and earth's, are sympathetic."⁸⁰

The women artists and the feminist theorists cited here point to a new mode of relationship; unlike the subject-object mode inherent in the scientific epistemology and the rationalist distancing practiced by the male animal rights theorists, it recognizes the varieties and differences among the species but does not quantify or rank them hierarchically in a Great Chain of Being. It respects the aliveness and spirit (the "thou") of other creatures and understands that they and we exist in the same unified field continuum. It appreciates that what we share—life—is more important than our differences. Such a relationship sometimes involves affection, sometimes awe, but always respect.

hunting; see "The Turkeys," in *Complete Stories* (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1971), 42–53. Other significant works include Colette's *Creatures Great and Small*, trans. Enid McLeod (London: Secker & Warburg, 1951); Virginia Woolf's *Flush: A Biography* (London: Hogarth, 1923); and May Sarton's *The Fur Person* (1957; reprint, New York: New American Library, 1970). See also Zahava, ed. (n. 30 above). Ellen Moers in *Literary Women* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977) notes "a rich untapped field remains to yield a fortune in scholarly dissertations, and that is the animals in the lives of literary women. George Sand had a horse . . . named Colette; Christina Rossetti had the wombat; Colette had all those cats; Virginia Woolf was positively dotty about all sorts of animals. But it is their dogs who will serve the purpose best—Elizabeth Barrett's spaniel named Flush; Emily Dickinson's 'dog as large as myself' " (260). The most promising recent theoretical approach to the issue of women's connection with animals is that proposed by Margaret Homans in *Bearing the Word: Language and Female Experience in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). Using Lacanian theory, Homans urges that women and nature are linked as "the absent referent" in patriarchal discourse. Her discussion of Heathcliff's sadistic treatment of birds in *Wuthering Heights* is especially suggestive. She observes that Cathy's aim is "to protect nature from figurative and literal killing at the hand of androcentric law" (78).

⁷⁹ Lauter, 19.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 177, 174.

In "Maternal Thinking" Sara Ruddick urges that a maternal epistemology, derived from the historical practice of mothering—that is, caring for an other who demands preservation and growth—can be identified. She calls it a "holding" attitude, one that "is governed by the priority of keeping over acquiring, of conserving the fragile, of maintaining whatever is at hand and necessary to the child's life." Ruddick contrasts the "holding" attitude to "scientific thought, as well as . . . to the instrumentalism of technocratic capitalism." Maternal practice recognizes "excessive control as a liability," in sharp distinction to scientific modes of manipulation.⁸¹

The maternal ethic involves a kind of reverential respect for the process of life and a realization that much is beyond one's control. Citing Iris Murdoch and Simone Weil as her philosophical predecessors, Ruddick calls this an ethic of humility. It is an attitude that "accepts not only the facts of damage and death, but also the facts of the independent and uncontrollable, developing and increasingly separate existences of the lives it seeks to preserve." Ruddick calls such an attitude "attentive love," the training to ask, "What are you going through?"⁸² Were vivisectionists to ask such a question, we would not have vivisection.

In a recent article Evelyn Keller draws similar distinctions to Ruddick's in her observations of Nobel prize winner Barbara McClintock's "feminine" scientific practice (which contrasts so markedly to the aggressive manipulation of nature proposed by Bacon, seen at its worst in lab animal experimentation). McClintock believes in "letting the material speak to you," allowing it to "tell you what to do next." She does not believe that scientists should "impose an answer" upon their material, as required in the mathematical paradigm of traditional scientific epistemology; rather, they should respond to it and retain an empathetic respect for it.⁸³ It is interesting that numerous women scientists and naturalists who have worked with and observed animal life for years—such as Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, Sally Carrighar, Francine Patterson, Janis Carter—exhibit this ethic implicitly: a caring, respecting attitude toward their "subjects."⁸⁴

⁸¹ Sara Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking," *Feminist Studies* 6, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 350–51. See also her *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon, 1989).

⁸² Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking," 351, 359.

⁸³ Evelyn Fox Keller, "Feminism and Science," *Signs* 7, no. 3 (Spring 1982): 599.

⁸⁴ See Jane Goodall, *In the Shadow of Man* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), *The Chimpanzees of Gombe: Patterns of Behavior* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986); Dian Fossey, *Gorillas in the Mist* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983); and Sally Carrighar, *Home to the Wilderness* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973). See Eugene Linden, *Silent Partners* (New York: Times Books, 1986), on Patterson and Carter. Janis Carter spent eight years trying to reintroduce Lucy, a

Finally, Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982) suggests that a feminine ethic is one rooted in a "mode of thinking that is contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract."⁸⁵ What she names a "morality of responsibility" is in direct contrast to the "morality of rights" seen in Regan's animal rights theory. In the former, a feminine mode, "morality and the preservation of life are contingent upon sustaining connection . . . [and] keeping the web of relationships intact." She contrasts this with the "rights" approach (which is seen in her study as more characteristically masculine) that relies upon "separation rather than connection," and on a "formal logic" of hierarchically ranged quantitative evaluations.⁸⁶

Gilligan, Ruddick, Lauter, Allen, Ruether, and French all propose an ethic that requires a fundamental respect for nonhuman life-forms, an ethic that listens to and accepts the diversity of environmental voices and the validity of their realities. It is an ethic that resists wrenching and manipulating the context so as to subdue it to one's categories; it is nonimperialistic and life affirming.

It may be objected that this ethic is too vague to be practicable in decisions concerning animals. My purpose here, however, is not to lay out a specific practical ethic but, rather, to indicate ways in which our thinking about animal/human relationships may be

chimpanzee who had learned sign language, to the wild in West Africa. She tells her moving story in "Survival Training for Chimps," *Smithsonian* 19, no. 5 (June 1988): 36–49. Goodall recently issued a sharp condemnation of the treatment of chimpanzees in American laboratories. See her "A Plea for the Chimps," *New York Times Magazine* (May 17, 1987). Also of interest is Cynthia Moss, *Elephant Memories: Thirteen Years in the Life of an Elephant Family* (New York: Morrow, 1988); and Sue Hubbell's relationship with her bees, seen in *A Country Year: Living the Questions* (New York: Random House, 1986).

⁸⁵ Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 19. For a further discussion of the ethic proposed in cultural feminist theory, see Donovan, "The New Feminist Moral Vision," in Donovan, *Feminist Theory* (n. 12 above), 171–86.

⁸⁶ Gilligan, 59, 19, 73. Another important work that develops a cultural feminist ethic is Nell Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984). Unfortunately, however, while Noddings believes the caring ethic she endorses is enhanced by a celebratory attitude toward the female domestic world, which includes, she notes, "feeding the cat," she nevertheless specifically rejects the main tenets of animal rights theory, including not eating meat. It is clear that her "caring" ethic extends only to humans; the arbitrariness of her position can only be attributed to an unexamined speciesism. Noddings's book, while admirable in other ways, is weakened by this bias, thereby illustrating how feminist theory must be informed by animal rights theory if we are to avoid the hypocrisies and inconsistencies of the tea-ladies condemned by Singer (for Noddings evinces affection for her pets even while endorsing carnivorousness [154]).

reoriented. Some may persist: suppose one had to choose between a gnat and a human being. It is, in fact, precisely this kind of either/or thinking that is rejected in the epistemology identified by cultural feminism. In most cases, either/or dilemmas in real life can be turned into both/ands. In most cases, dead-end situations such as those posed in lifeboat hypotheticals can be prevented. More specifically, however, it is clear that the ethic sketched here would mean feminists must reject carnivorousism; the killing of live animals for clothing; hunting; the trapping of wildlife for fur (largely for women's luxury consumption); rodeos; circuses; and factory farming; and that they must support the drastic redesigning of zoos (if zoos are to exist at all) to allow animals full exercise space in natural habitats; that they should reject the use of lab animals for testing of beauty and cleaning products (such as the infamous "LD-50" and Draize tests) and military equipment, as well as psychological experimentation such as that carried out in the Harlow primate lab at the University of Wisconsin; that they should support efforts to replace medical experiments by computer models and tissue culture; that they should condemn and work to prevent further destruction of wetlands, forests, and other natural habitats. All of these changes must be part of a feminist reconstruction of the world.

Natural rights and utilitarianism present impressive and useful philosophical arguments for the ethical treatment of animals. Yet, it is also possible—indeed, necessary—to ground that ethic in an emotional and spiritual conversation with nonhuman life-forms. Out of a women's relational culture of caring and attentive love, therefore, emerges the basis for a feminist ethic for the treatment of animals. We should not kill, eat, torture, and exploit animals because they do not want to be so treated, and we know that. If we listen, we can hear them.

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